TWELFTH YEAR

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Universal Religion

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THE UNITARIAN RETREAT TOWARD ORTHODOXY.*

By John W. Roberts.

The surrender of General Lee at Appomattox initiated a new era in our national history, an era dominated by the ideal of peace. All hearts were then turned toward conciliation and union, and on all sides a concerted effort was made to guard against everything which had in it the seeds of dissension. In harmony with this natural drift in the current of things, the leaders of the liberal religions in America conceived a plan to conciliate and unite the warring faiths, and the Unitarian conference was organized with the view of bringing the religious life under the influence of the new ideal. The ultimate purpose of Dr. Henry W. Bellows, the founder of that conference, was to gather all the sects into one grand religious fraternity. He hoped to bring all the denominations in the republic under one flag, just as all the states had been brought under the Stars and Stripes; and in the light of this ideal it is easy to understand why he insisted so strongly on acknowledging Christ as the Master of the religious life. He well knew that in all the conservative evangelical churches Christ was given this supremacy, and he reasoned that if there were some one organization which placed the chief emphasis on the supremacy of Christ all churches might be induced in the interest of peace to join, thus bringing about a religious union comparable with the political union of the re-united states. But the plan failed, for only the churches of his own household came in, and some of these protested against the principle underlying the scheme. And the prospect of success in this direction is no brighter today than it was forty years ago. The evangelical churches have not yet joined the National Conference, an organization meant to include not only Unitarians, but all other Christians.

It is easy for us even now to sympathize with the ideal which led to the founding of the National Conference in 1865. It was much easier then, for the ideal must have appealed very strongly to a people weary and exhausted with four years of desperate fighting. And it was very natural that Dr. Bellows, himself an active participant in that death struggle

*Extract from a discourse delivered in the First Unitarian Church of Ayer, Mass.

between brethren, should have formulated a plan for a peaceful union of all the warring religious sects. Tired of the battles of the flesh, he shrank from the prospect of having to take part in any kind of warfare in the future. Nevertheless this ideal of peace, in spite of its surface appeal to our sympathy, harbored a tremendous fallacy, and in the failure to see this fallacy lay the reason for the Unitarian retreat toward orthodoxy. Let us see if we can make this reason plain:

It is to James Freeman Clarke that we are indebted for the rational grounds of the retreat, and so we turn to him for what we may call the philosophy of the Unitarian reaction toward orthodoxy. A quotation from his book, "Orthodoxy, Its Truths and Errors," will give us the point of view. After stating that the upshot of the study of the Christian doctrines by the Germans had been to show that there was substantial agreement among all Christians, Dr. Clarke continues in this vein: "By substantial truth we mean this—that in all the great systems of opinion which have had a deep hold on the human mind, over broad spaces and through long periods, there is something suited to man's nature, and corresponding with the facts of the case. The mind of man was made for truth, and not for error. Error is transient; truth only is permanent. Men do not love error for its own sake, but for the sake of something with which it is connected. After a while errors are eliminated and the substance retained. The great universal abiding convictions of men must therefore contain truth. If it were not so we might well despair, for if the mind of the race could fall into unmixed error the only remedy by which the heart can be cured and the life redeemed from evil would be taken away. But it is not so. God has made the mind for truth as he has adapted the taste for its appropriate food. In the main and in the long run, what men believe **is the truth,** and all catholic beliefs are valid beliefs. Opinions held by all men everywhere and at all times must be substantially true."

Dr. Clarke's argument rests on comparatively simple premises. One of them is that the mind is a safe guide to truth. Taken strictly and literally, such a view of the mind is obviously untenable, for as a matter of history the human mind has been as prolific of error as of truth. Even with the qualification **semper, ubique, ab omnibus** we do not escape the dangers of the mind's fallibility. And Dr. Clarke was himself aware of this, for he felt it necessary to add that only with

reference to **substantial** truth was the mind to be trusted. But what is substantial truth? Does it mean anything more than the simple statement that there are some things about which we all may agree? But who ever disputed this? The sects of Christendom have never disputed it, and if that were all that was ever involved in any controversy sectarian differences ought to be deplored. Dr. Clarke's search for some truth in all the doctrines of the Christian church might be altogether successful, but his success would not thereby reconcile the warring sects, because the truth he found in them all was not the matter in dispute. His failure to see this disqualified him for the work of leading the Unitarians forward along the lines laid down by Channing and Parker.

This ideal of purchasing peace with the truth common to all sects placed the Unitarians in a position of inconsistency. For if the orthodox creeds were substantially true, why did the Unitarians ever withdraw from the evangelical communion? This has always been a difficult question for everyone who has ever tried to unite all the varying sects of Christendom. He who argues that all sects are substantially true must confess (that is, if he cares anything for being true **substantially**,) that the sects themselves originated without a real cause. If the differences which divide are superficial, then why were these superficial things taken so seriously as to lead to disruptions and schisms? Furthermore, to minimize the differences (what Dr. Clarke calls the formal and intellectual element in religion) is to cast a reproach on the great founders of all religious sects. And this leads finally to a wholesale denunciation of all men who have shown any originality in turning aside from the old beaten tracks.

The truth is that our denunciations of differences and of the institutions built thereon are a radical mistake. It is a sign of spiritual and intellectual decay. It betokens both in the individual and the race weakness and not strength. If the differences that divide are of no consequence, then all divergences of opinion and the new departures they originate ought to be condemned. But who is ready to make such a wholesale condemnation? To begin with, we would have to be so unpatriotic as to denounce the revolutionary fathers for breaking away from King George and founding a new republic. George Washington made a mistake and he should never have become the father of any country. Luther made a mistake in protesting as he did against the Roman church, and

we all should deeply regret that we are not now the spiritual subjects of the Roman Pontiff. Channing blundered in preaching such a sermon on the differences that divide at Baltimore. In short, as soon as we begin to apply the principle underlying Clarke's theology we see too clearly the fallacy it involves. Only by keeping the principle floating in the air in an abstract form are we able to see it at all. It appeals to our theoretical intellect and to some extent brings order out of chaos. But in doing so it undermines the very foundations of our western civilization, benumbing the discriminating faculty upon which the discovery of truth depends.

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THE MOTHER.

By James H. West.

Why should we limit Power and Mystery
To one poor pronoun of our human speech?
Has deity no higher, wider reach
Than we can grasp when glibly we say "He"?
The fertile universe at least is "She,"
Fruitful in brain and pinion, flower and peach;—
And ever dumb when we its face beseech,
It seems but "It," it stands so silently.

O mightly Mother!—foremost art thou this!
And we thine offspring, clinging to thy breast!
Thou givest us the stars and streams for toys;
In thy benignant smile alone is bliss.
Though ignorant, in thy wise calm we rest,
And when thou frownest, darkened are our joys.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME.

By President Dr. William Snell.

Members and Friends of the First Free Church:

It becomes my duty and pleasure at this time to welcome you to this our eleventh annual roll-call festival. In view of the stormy weather without and the long programme before us within, and the necessity of an early adjournment to enable those living at a distance to catch a car for home, my remarks must be brief, though they are not thereby intended to be any the less a hearty welcome to you.

To see so large a representation of our society and its friends present at this annual festival, which has been twice postponed, is a matter for sincere congratulation. I am sure

that it must give pleasure to both Mr. Martin and Mr. Roberts, as well as to every one of us, to meet so many loyal supporters of the cause of Free religion.

It is too late to say that we are commencing a new era in the life of the First Free Church, for that new era is already well begun and so far advanced under the leadership of Mr. Roberts that its success is already assured.

During the past year we have been called upon to bid good-bye and Godspeed to the pioneers of free religion in Tacoma, Mr. and Mrs. Martin. And in doing so some of us—indeed, perhaps many of us—looked to the future with sad misgivings as to what it might bring to our society. This was but natural in view of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Martin had been so long with us, and looked up to by us as leaders and teachers to such an extent that we found it difficult to even think of our movement apart from them. Their labors with us had been of such a nature and their personalities had been so closely identified with the work as to seem to some of us that the structure they had built must fall if their support were to be withdrawn.

But the experience has been a lesson to us, for it has shown us that the cause is greater than its leaders. However much we may have loved Mr. and Mrs. Martin; however much we may have grieved at parting with them, we have been brought to the full consciousness of the fact that it is a cause, a movement, an advance in religious ideas and ideals that our society represents. That we have learned our lesson is demonstrated by our attendance here tonight. It is demonstrated also by our attendance at the Sunday morning discourses of Mr. Roberts, by the work of our Sunday school and other auxiliary societies. And as time goes on may we give ever stronger and stronger proof that it is the cause we love and strive for.

To Mr. and Mrs. Martin I wish to say, and in so saying I believe I am voicing the feeling of all our members, that while we still love them as we have learned to love them in the years that have passed, they no longer occupy this place alone in our affections; that beside them we now place Mr. and Mrs. Roberts, and that it is our aim to give our new leaders, not only the same love, but also the same loyalty, devotion to principles and help in the work which we formerly gave to them.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT.*

By Alfred W. Martin and John W. Roberts.

To preserve the unbroken continuity of the minister's annual reports I yield to Mr. Roberts' suggestion and present a report for 1903 from January to September inclusive, leaving it to him to complete the record from the date of his incumbency on October fourth to the close of the year.

The work of our eleventh year together had scarcely begun when, like a thunderbolt out of a clear sky, came the alarming announcement of the resignation of Mr. R. T. Reid as treasurer of the church and member of its board of trustees. For ten years it had seemed to us all that Mr. Reid was a most indispensable servant of our cause. The conviction had been steadily borne in upon us that this church never had a more faithful, devoted and zealous worker. No wonder, then, that we were startled, alarmed and even stunned by the news of his resignation. As soon as we had adjusted ourselves in some measure to the inevitable loss we sought suitable means of making known to him our feeling over his departure, and this took form first in a set of resolutions, duly adopted by the congregation; next, in appointing him an honorary trustee of the church; and lastly, in the presentation, on the Sunday before the summer vacation, of some golden symbols of our gratitude, love and best wishes. Fortunately the duties of his new and important position are such as to bring him back to us occasionally, and our hope is that these occasional visits will increase from year to year.

Early in February I found it necessary to relinquish my regular duties for a month, and, in obedience to the doctor's advice, spend the time in California. This necessitated a series of pulpit "supplies" for four Sundays, and on the first of these I succeeded in fulfilling a long-cherished plan of an exchange with Rabbi Wise of Portland, I speaking for him on Friday evening, February 21st, in his temple, after a lecture before the council of Jewish women on Thursday afternoon and a lecture before the Young Men's Ethical Union and "Bene B'rith." The services of the remaining three Sundays were conducted by Rev. David Holford, a come-outer from the Baptists; Rabbi Joseph, of Seattle, and Rev. James Coulter, of Portland, engaged there in "settlement" work.

No sooner had I planned the itinerary of my trip when an invitation reached me from Chicago, asking me to partici-

*Read at the Annual Roll Call Sociable of the First Free Church, Jan. 16th, 1904.

pate in the sessions of the "Congress of Religion" to be held in Los Angeles about the middle of March. This invitation I accepted, making the most of the opportunity to disseminate literature descriptive of our movement after having addressed the Congress on "The Religion of the Future." During this stay in Los Angeles I arranged with Dr. Thomas and Mr. Jones, the two chief officers of the Congress, for a session to be held on April 5th at Tacoma in the morning and at Seattle in the evening, a plan successfully carried out. And if on the one hand Seattle had the larger attendance, on the other hand Tacoma had the larger collection, though but five cents in excess of that contributed at the Seattle session.

Among the publications issued under my supervision during the year, two are worthy of special mention. The "Proceedings at the Tenth Annual Festival" of our church, making a neat book of about 100 pages, and tract No. 18 in our series of "Free Church Tracts," being a review of Miss Abbot's Catechism by the Rev. John W. Chadwick of the Unitarian denomination and a rejoinder to Mr. Chadwick by the lamented Dr. F. E. Abbot, father of the authoress. So great was the demand for this tract that an extra edition of 500 copies was issued in June, making a total circulation of 1,000 copies of this important publication.

During the year we have had to record three deaths in our necrology. On March 28th we lost one of our most devoted out of town friends in the person of Mr. S. A. Hartwell of Louisville, Ky., father of Mrs. H. B. Caldwell. Seven years ago he visited the city for a few months, attending our Sunday services during his stay as often as possible. The genuineness and depth of his interest in our work he evidenced by sending to the treasurer every year a cheque for twenty dollars, reference to the last contribution you heard in the treasurer's report.

On the tenth of May I was called to officiate at the funeral of Mrs. L. K. Bowdish, whom many of you will remember as among the regular attendants at our Sunday services till five years ago, when a protracted illness confined her to the house. But even there she did what she could, sending occasional contributions to the treasury and keeping constantly in touch with the work of the society. During the summer vacation we lost a most loyal friend of our Cause in the death of Mr. C. S. Cranson. His duties as a conductor of the Northern Pacific railway forbade his being with us as often as he wished to be, but all the while he had our Cause deeply at heart and

never turned his back on a single occasion where he could prove his loyalty to the First Free Church of Tacoma. Our Sunday services for the year were discontinued for the summer months on June 14th and resumed September 20th.

Of the mental dis-ease I suffered during that interval, trying to solve the Seattle problem, you know something already. But over against the strain and pain of parting which the solution involved stands the ever-increasing satisfaction and joy of realizing that I have enriched the community and strengthened our Cause by bringing to this city and this church a man who possesses to so unusual a degree the two most essential requisites of a successful ministry—I mean ability and consecration. I rejoice that you have pledged yourselves to him even as he has given himself to you, and sure I am that out of this mutual confidence and regard, deepening as it inevitably will, your own lives will be the richer and gladder, while the influence of this church as a powerful factor in the advancement of the city's highest interests will be increasingly felt.

On the 27th September I made public announcement of my most carefully considered decision to become resident minister of the Society for Universal Religion, which for five years I had served as a non-resident minister. That announcement was made only after I had found in Mr. John W. Roberts one who I was absolutely convinced would carry on the work to the steadily increasing satisfaction of all of you, and my conviction has been more than demonstrated within the three months' ministry you have already had from him. At the congregational meeting held after the service on September 27th my resignation was formally accepted and the question of inviting Mr. Roberts voted upon. There were those present who doubted the wisdom or even the desirability of continuing the Sunday services and the church work. But all such skepticism was promptly and effectively annihilated by the speech of a layman who bespoke the sentiments of loyalty and fidelity felt in the hearts of all who had been with the society through its hardest days. To Mr. George Browne belongs the honor of having given utterance that morning to those sentiments of patriotic and disinterested devotion which left not an atom of doubt in any mind as to the perpetuation of the First Free Church of Tacoma beyond the term of my eleven years' ministry.

Fortunately, Mr. Roberts' coming was so planned that the dangers and disconcertions of an interregnum were avoided.

On the first Sunday of October, in the auditorium above, I committed to him the sacred trust of my position, and to him I now leave the completing of this report for 1903.

MR. ROBERTS' REPORT.

The three months covered by the joint report which I have the honor to present at this time must be regarded in certain respects the most remarkable in the history of this First Free Church of Tacoma. You are not strangers to adversity. You have seen many bright hopes bloom and die. You have experienced the hardships of perhaps the severest business depression that has ever befallen any city. You have realized what is meant by the proverb that "riches make themselves wings." You have stood beside the bier of loved ones and escorted their lifeless bodies to their last earthly rest. And now for the first time in twelve years you are asked to listen to a new voice instead of that familiar one which has ministered unto you through all these trials and comforted you in all these sorrows.

This room is filled tonight with "invisible presences." In your minds this annual roll-call sociable is surrounded by the tender memories of some dozen similar occasions, when you have been wont to meet together to talk over the affairs of this religious society. And the contrast between the glories of the past and the misfortunes of the present is perhaps more keenly felt at this hour than it has been at any time during the last three months.

It would be impossible to exaggerate the loss sustained by this church in the removal of Mr. and Mrs. Martin to Seattle. And as far as the interests of this particular society are concerned we can have but one feeling, and that is the feeling of regret. But, as one of the former presidents of the United States once said, "It is a condition and not a theory that now confronts us." An overruling power, called providence, fate, or the logic of events, is responsible for Mr. Martin's removal. The interests of the Cause we represent demanded it. And it is from this point of view that we feel it to be our duty to avert our attention from our losses and dwell as little as possible on our regrets; "those hallowed paths 'twere wiser to forget." We know that many evils are ministerial to some good and that many clouds have a silver lining. So in this instance there remain some things yet to be thankful for.

In the first place, we ought to be thankful that Mr. and

Mrs. Martin are still our neighbors. It might have been very different. Some distant city, either on the Atlantic or in the middle West, might have claimed them. And we should then have been separated by as many hundreds of miles as we are now by miles. Furthermore, our near neighborhood is not a mere sentiment, for Mr. and Mrs. Martin have acted the part of ideal neighbors. Not only are they frequent visitors at our homes, where a warm welcome always awaits them, but they have done much hard work in connection with the various organizations of this church; and it is eminently fitting at this time that both on behalf of this society and on my own behalf I should make grateful acknowledgment for the many kind services and wise counsel we have received from Mr. and Mrs. Martin. But for their helpful words of guidance and encouragement our problem would have been much more difficult than it now is.

Another reason for being thankful is found in the fact that Mr. Martin is meeting with such exceptional success in building up another church of free religion in our neighboring city. The rivalry existing between our two cities is on the whole commendable, and there is no condemnation in being loyal to the city in which we live. But there is nothing in all of this inconsistent with our rejoicing over the success of our Cause in Seattle. For we may rest assured that Mr. Martin's success must always be the success of our Cause.

Coming now to matters nearer home, I think we should be thankful that this society has weathered so severe a storm so well. That our craft still rides the waves shows that she is made of fine material and well put together. During the last three months your loyalty has been put to a very severe test and the patience with which you have stood the trial speaks volumes for the character of your convictions. This has been shown not only by the individual members, but by the officers of the various organizations included in this church. The board of trustees and the presidents and secretaries of the auxiliary societies have stood bravely at their posts. And I think it would be difficult to find another church that could give a similar exhibition of those fine graces of character in which the essence of true religion must be finally summed up. In his tenth anniversary address Mr. Martin ventured to say that during the last five years the conviction had deepened in him that there were enough loyal spirits in this Free Church to save it from dissolution in the event of his relinquishing his

post. This was not a prophecy, but a reasoned conclusion based upon the sound laws of cause and effect. The principles to the discovery and dissemination of which he has given the best years of his incomparably active life belong among those forces that take hold of conduct. And as every antecedent must be followed by its own consequent, so the principles of an ideal religion must be followed by their own ideal consequences to our practical life.

Before bringing this joint report to a close you may be expecting me to say something about the **status quo.** But there are several reasons why I should omit making my estimate of our present resources and strength. In the first place, you have already listened to the excellent reports of the officers at the head ot the different departments and as these reports must be the basis of all our opinions concerning the present status of this church you are better able than I to draw the proper conclusions. In the second place I have not personally examined the details of the workings of the church and it would be a mistake for me to pronounce snap judgment about so important a matter. I refrain, therefore, from saying anything on the subject, and I do so for reasons which I believe you will respect. Hasty conclusions deduced from an imperfect knowledge of facts are no credit to any man—least of all to a minister. And of the many sins from which I wish to be delivered this is the first.

Nor do I think that I am justified at this time in discussing policies and outlining plans for the future. During our three months' residence among you, Mrs. Roberts and myself have tried to do what we could to repair the breaches in the working ranks. That we have come far short of our ideal goes without saying, and we are very keenly conscious of our limitations and inadequate powers, but of our willingness to work and to suffer, if need be, you may rest assured.

It remains for me to incorporate in this three months' report the record of the death of Dr. Francis Ellingwood Abbot, of Cambridge, Massachusetts, which occurred on the 23rd of last October. Immediately after receiving the sad news this church passed appropriate resolutions, which were sent to the surviving members of the family and printed in our monthly organ. Arrangements were also made for a memorial service, which was held on the 1st of November, in the morning here at Tacoma and in the evening at Seattle, and the December number of Universal Religion was made a memorial number

in honor of our lamented honorary trustee. To what was said in the resolutions and addresses delivered by Mr. Martin and myself, which you have all heard or read, I have little now to add. As there are many in this society who have had the privilege of knowing Dr. Abbot's daughter, it will be very gratifying to you to know that Miss Abbot has borne her sorrow with marvelous heroism. In reading a letter recently received from her I was led to exclaim, "Here is a young woman worthy to stand side by side with the saints of the Christian calendar!"

THE WOMAN'S UNION.

Mrs. M. S. Temple, President.

Two years ago the name of our organization was changed from The Woman's Friendly Society to The Woman's Union, and, although there is no thought of changing that name again, if such a change were deemed wise I would suggest that we be called the Woman's Missionary Society, for during this year we have sent missionaries to the heathen in Seattle, San Francisco, Palo Alto, Los Angeles, and even to Alaska. But notwithstanding all of this we have a membership of thirty-four, all of whom show an eager interest in the work of the Union.

Our distributions since last June have been $175 to the church treasury, $25 towards the rent of the room for the Old Town Boys' Club, and several smaller amounts for incidental demands, leaving a balance in our treasury of $34.85.

The work of the Union extends along several lines. It appoints a committee on decorations—one lady for each month—whose duty it is to decorate the auditorium for Sunday services; one committee for each of the four sociables held during the year; a committee on Post Office Mission; a committee on hospital work; and a committee on the Old Town Girls' Club. The work of the last three committees will be described in the reports which they will give this evening.

Since last October the Union has held one business meeting a month, one special meeting, and two teas for the friends and members of the society. At the next regular meeting, February 3rd, we expect to begin a parliamentary drill class, conducted by Mr. Roberts, which will meet for half an hour at the close of the regular business meeting.

In closing I wish to thank all the women of the Union for their hearty co-operation. Our year closes with the election of officers on June 2nd, and I can sincerely say that,

judging from my own experience, no one need shrink from the onerous duties of president with such loyal and enthusiastic members.

YOUNG WOMEN'S ALLIANCE.

Mary S. Cowen, President.

It gives me great pleasure to be able to report so prosperous a year for the Young Women's Alliance. While our aims are intellectual and social, it is also one of our avowed purposes to "further the interests of the First Free Church." Therefore at the close of last year, in June, 1903, we gave to the church sixty dollars and to the Fortnightly Club thirty dollars. At the same meeting it was decided that the Alliance should contribute thirty dollars a month during the present year for the church music.

Until our last meeting we had not taken up any regular course of study, but had discussed a variety of subjects, having had two most delightful and instructive papers, one on "The Bad Manners of Good Society," by Mrs. Martin, and one on "Practical Nursing," by Miss Derrickson.

If the first half of our seventh year has been marked by financial rather than intellectual gain, we expect the last half will bear a distinctively intellectual stamp. Our real work began at our last meeting, on Monday, January 4th, when we listened to an introductory talk on Evolution given by Mr. John W. Roberts. Under his able leadership we expect to seek for knowledge of this subject through the rest of the year.

THE POST OFFICE MISSION.

Mrs. Fannie M Champlin, Chairman.

The Post Office Mission books passed into my hands with nineteen correspondents on the roll. Since then there have been some erasures, but also many additions, so that I am now able to report twenty-seven live Post Office Mission correspondents, among whom there have been distributed this last year ninety-nine copies of Universal Religion, twenty-four tracts and several copies of sermons and miscellaneous literature. While the majority of these correspondents are in our own state, we are gratified to find requests coming to us from Wisconsin, Idaho, Kentucky, Pennsylvania, California and Massachusetts. The motives of these requests are worthy of notice, ranging from mere curiosity to a sincere passion for the truth. Some of the acknowledgments have been extremely kind, though others have been less sympa-

thetic. But we comfort ourselves with the thought that we are obeying the old commandment in the Jewish Bible: "Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days."

THE PANSY CLUB.

Mrs. J. W. Roberts, Director.

During the last year the Pansy Club has had two directors. From January to May the work of the club was under the direction of Mrs. T. O. Abbott, meetings being held every Saturday morning in the parlors of Tacoma Music Hall. On the 9th of May, the beginning of the summer recess, the club was entertained by Mrs. Martin, who awarded prizes to those who had done the most careful work and had been most regular and punctual in attendance. On the 17th of October, the close of the summer recess, the club resumed the work under the direction of Mrs. Abbott, who continued to meet with the girls every Saturday morning until November, when, owing to the removal of Mrs. Abbott to California, I assumed the responsibilities of director.

The system of instruction pursued in the club is the one adopted by the Teachers' College of New York City. The aim of this system is to educate the girls to be intelligent little needlewomen in plain sewing, and too much cannot be said in favor of the method by which this end is attained.

In practice the work is divided into three courses. The first gives special attention to the preliminary principles of sewing, such as forming habits of proper position, neatness, learning to use the thimble, to hold the needle properly, and to make and use the plainer stitches. The second and third courses are applications of the work of the first leading on to more and more difficult use of the plainer stitches, with the addition of some of the fancy stitches and their uses. As far as possible each child is taught to prepare her own work, thus giving important instruction in economy, judgment and invention. Each child is required to keep a record of her work by mounting each completed and approved model in a blank book. These mounts are inspected at the close of each term, and furnish at the close of the course a complete set of the models used in the system of instruction.

On last May one of the pupils completed the entire three courses.

In addition to the instruction given in sewing, the director gives short talks before each lesson on the materials used

in sewing—for example, on fabrics, needles and thimbles.

Since October the membership has increased and at present twelve answer very promptly and regularly to the roll-call.

The annual dues are 25 cents, which furnish ample means for purchasing the materials, the only expense connected with the club. The club's finances are therefore in a very good condition. This year closes with $10.57 in the treasury.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

H. H. Garretson, Superintendent.

As an organization the Sunday School consists of 108 pupils, carefully graded with respect to age and mental ability into eight separate classes, ranging from the kindergarten class of Miss Allen to and including the advanced class of adults who, under the leadership of Mr. J. W. Roberts, are studying the principles of Universal Religion. The subject of study this year is "The Life of Jesus in Art." Our work has been particularly successful because of the unique way in which it has been carried on. From the Perry Picture Company's large series of religious pictures it was found possible to select some twenty-three pictures—masterpieces of the world's greatest artists—which portrayed the world's conception of the dramatic points in the life of Jesus. The series selected begins with Sargent's "Frieze of The Prophets" in the Boston Library, and closes with Reuben's "Descent from the Cross." We purchased over one hundred pictures of each kind, so that each pupil might have a lesson picture every Sunday.

A teachers' meeting is held every two weeks, and under the direction of Mr. Roberts the teachers study how to use these pictures to the best advantage in suiting them to the varying ages of their classes. The general plan is to place the pictures in the hands of the children, as a concrete foundation around which to group the lesson thoughts. The pictures are distributed to the classes and the pupils paste them in their albums in connection with whatever memory device the teacher may have provided for the class. Throughout the course it is made clear to the child what the position of the Free Church is with regard to what he studies, impressing on the child the human, the natural side of Jesus as a man, subject to a man's temptations, disappointments, and triumphs—a living personification of patience, self-denial, and devotion

to others. Each Sunday at the close of the lesson the superintendent assigns to each of the eight classes a question which is to be answered by some member of that class on the succeeding Sunday. On that Sunday he reads the questions, calling indiscriminately on any one member from each class for the answer to his class's question. This method of examination is found to be most profitable in its power to fix the main points of the lesson in the pupils' minds and often leads to original and interesting answers.

In connection with the regular work of the school we have from time to time our special Festival Sundays, the principal ones being "The Harvest Festival," "Christmas Festival," "Humane Sunday," "Patriotic Sunday" and "Spring Festival." On these festival Sundays the pupils prepare a special programme. These special programmes quicken the religious aspirations, teaching the lessons of charity, helpfulness, righteousness and patriotism.

Financially the Sunday School is in good condition. All debts are paid to date, and about twenty-five dollars in the treasury. We are deeply indebted to many good friends who have aided us with gifts during the past year, namely, Miss Frothingham, Mr. J. A. Walsh, Mr. R. T. Reid, Mrs. C. A. Darmer, and Mr. and Mrs. A. W. Martin.

SUNDAY SCHOOL LIBRARY.

Miss Natalie Smylie, Librarian.

To report interestingly on a Sunday school library is a difficult undertaking, for there is not much of general interest to say except that we have a library and that it is fairly well patronized. We have something over three hundred volumes of well selected books, all in good condition, among which may be found all the works of Dickens, several excellent biographies, a number of good animal stories, and a large number of children's books suitable to all ages. In our birthday offerings we have an excellent provision for the increase of our library, whereby we are enabled to purchase several new books every year. An accession book recommended by Mr. Roberts and sent for by him will enable the librarian to keep an accurate account of every book owned by the church. In it are several heads of classification under which the book is to be entered, enabling the librarian to keep a full description of every book in the library. In the near future we hope to be able to get out a card catalogue in which every book will be

classified according to its author, title and subject. This will add greatly to the interest and usefulness of the library.

HOSPITAL COMMITTEE.

Mrs. Emma Segar. Chairman.

On the day before Christmas, in a hack loaded with oranges, apples, Christmas cards, periodicals and other good things, Mrs. Sharmon and I made our annual visit to the hospitals. Our first call was at the county hospital, where we went from bed to bed, leaving with each patient something to make him happy. Thence we went to the hospital of St. Joseph, and last to the hospital of Fanny Paddock. Many of the patients asked us to whom they were indebted for such kindness, and we were proud to answer "To the Woman's Union of the First Free Church." One patient said: " I know them; they are kind and good ladies, and were around last year, too"; and I told them it was the best and most liberal organization we had in town, or I would not belong to it. I had the pleasure to cheer up a few of the foreigners in words of their own language, for they did not understand English. At the county hospital we left a few packages of clothing contributed by the ladies of the Union, Mrs. George Browne being one who has always something for the poor old men.

UNIVERSAL RELIGION.

Samuel Collyer, Treasurer.

The report for the year on this valuable adjunct to the work of the Tacoma and Seattle societies was made by Mr. Samuel Collyer in behalf of the publication committee, consisting of Miss N. Beach of Seattle and Miss Laura Frier of Tacoma. Mr. Collyer stated that the monthly journal was not receiving anywhere near the amount of support that it was entitled to, and pointed out the fact that the number of subscribers in the two cities, Tacoma and Seattle, was nearly equal.

The subscriptions for the year, said he, had been handsomely augmented by a round two dozen received from Ayer, Mass., and with donations of funeral fees by Mr. Martin amounting to twenty dollars (Mr. Martin's fees from that source having always been devoted to this purpose since the journal was founded), and a donation of ten dollars from Mrs. Ednah D. Cheney, of Boston, the journal has been able to maintain itself. Universal Religion (formerly the Free Church Record) is now in its twelfth year. It is published monthly

from October to June, inclusive, and is edited by Mr. Martin and Mr. Roberts.

TREASURER'S REPORT.

Samuel Collyer, Treasurer.

Mr. Collyer prefaced his report by stating that he was probably the only person in the society who fully realized the debt of obligation which the society owed to its late retiring, unselfish and indefatigable treasurer, Mr. R. T. Reid, whose removal to San Francisco had made it necessary for another to accept the responsibility and the trust. Not only was it a crushing blow to lose the services of Mr. Reid as treasurer after more than ten years of work in that important office, but his timely counsel and genial companionship were ours no more except as he might visit us from time to time as opportunity offered.

Mr. Collyer's report as treasurer showed total receipts for the year of $3,405.42, and expenditures of $3,367.44, leaving a balance in the treasury of $37.98.

OUR WORK IN "OLD TOWN."

For lack of funds the work among the boys and girls in Old Town was not taken up immediately after the close of the summer recess. But we are happy to be able to announce that the generosity of Mrs. William Jones and Mrs. S. Wilkeson has enabled Miss Carolyn Mason and Mr. Harvey L. Johnson to resume their labors of love in Old Town. The influence of the two Old Town clubs, the one for the girls under the direction of Miss Mason and the other for the boys under the direction of Mr. Johnson, cannot be too highly commended, and it is to be hoped that in the future nothing will prevent the continuance of this noble work.

UNITY AND DIVERSITY OF RELIGIONS.

All historical religions are essentially one in so far as they represent the universal aspiration, the idealward aim and effort of mankind. They are essentially different in virtue of their various local origins. They have generic unity and specific diversity. In the former our eyes are fixed upon the features common to them all, i. e., upon the universal element which inheres in all, yet belongs exclusively to none, being the property of universal human nature. In the latter our attention is riveted upon the peculiar features of each religion,

i. e., upon the special element which differentiates each from all the rest. Thus Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Christianity, and the rest are all special historical religions, universal only in part, only in so far as they exhibit in common ideas and sentiments that are representative of universal human nature. The truth or falsity of each religion is only a matter of degree, because each arose under circumstances peculiar to itself, under the inspiration of its founder, whose ideas were both colored and limited by the conditions of his age and place, sharing the natural errors attaching to all transient forms of thought in the progressive march of man.

NOTES FROM THE FIELD.

Seattle.

The annual meeting of the Society for Universal Religion was held Sunday evening, January 3rd, immediately after the service. The election of six trustees to fill the vacancies caused by the expiration of the terms of Messrs. Arthur, Epler and George and by the resignation of Messrs. Furth, Davies and Osborn (to assume positions on the newly formed Advisory Council of nine) resulted as follows: R. R. George, John Mather, John M. Winslow, S. A. Rosenfeld, R. J. Reekie and F. R. Thompson, who, with Dr. Sloan, Leo Kohn and Thomas Ensminger, constitute the new board. The electon of members of the Advisory Council resulted as follows: Messrs. Osborn (chairman), Parker (secretary), Furth, Davies, Arthur, Epler, E. C. Hughes, E. O. Graves and B. Galland.

The "Junior Branch" of the Society is a sort of "children's church," managed in all its details by the children themselves under Mr. Martin's supervision. Each Sunday he conducts a service specially arranged for them and delivers a brief address on the life of Jesus, illustrated by photographs, copies of which are presented to each child. This organization began November 8th, 1903, with fourteen members, and now has nearly one hundred.

Mrs. Martin organized a "Young Ladies' Alliance" for self-culture and philanthropy on the evening of January 13th with nine charter members. Talks on European travel and a study of selected poems of Browning constitute the programme for the season. Plans for philanthropic work are to be discussed at the first meeting in February.